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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/800,524	03/08/2001	Kunimasa Suzuki	204078US6	5017

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OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.
1940 DUKE STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

EXAMINER

ZEENDER, FLORIAN M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3627

DATE MAILED: 10/14/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/800,524

Applicant(s)

KUNIMASA SUZUKI *st*

Examiner

F. Ryan Zeender

Art Unit

3627

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 July 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, requires the specification to be written in "full, clear, concise, and exact terms." The entire specification is replete with terms which are not clear, concise and exact. The entire specification should be revised carefully in order to comply with 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph. An example of terminology which is not clear is: On page 3, paragraph 2, the language, "in the sales channel utilized the network" is grammatically incorrect.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

Claims 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

The basis of this rejection is set forth in a two-prong test of:

- (1) whether the invention is within the technological arts; and
- (2) whether the invention produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result.

For a claimed invention to be statutory, the claimed invention must be within the technological arts. Mere ideas in the abstract (i.e., abstract idea, law of nature, natural phenomena) that do not apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts fail to promote the "progress of science and the useful arts" (i.e., the physical sciences as opposed to social sciences, for example) and therefore are found to be non-statutory subject matter. For a process claim, the recited process must somehow apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts.

In the present case, claims 6-8 only recite an abstract idea. The recited steps of merely receiving first and second order information via a network and grasping an actual sales condition does not necessarily apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts since all of the recited steps can be performed in the mind of the user or by use of a pencil and paper (a "network" does not need to involve technology). These steps only constitute an idea of how to provide a distribution management method.

Additionally, for a claimed invention to be statutory, the claimed invention must produce a useful, concrete, and tangible result. In the present case, the claimed invention controls stock of merchandise which meets the criteria.

Although the recited process produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result, since the claimed invention, as a whole, is not within the technological arts as explained above, claims 6-8 are deemed to be directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 3, last line, it is not clear what is being stored in the second channel.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sharp et al. in view of Duffy et al. '610 and Official Notice.

Sharp et al. disclose order information receiving means for receiving via a computer network 150 at least first and second order information of merchandise (See for example Col. 1, line 56); the first and second order information being formed based on respective first and second purchase requests received via respective first and second sales channels (i.e., first and second customers) that use the network (See for example Col. 3, lines 14-17); and stock control means for controlling a stock of said merchandise to be distributed to the first and second sales channels based on the first and second order information.

Sharp et al. lack the specific teaching of the second purchase request being received via a second sales channel that does not use the network; the supplier supplying the merchandise based on an actual sales condition; and the network being the Internet utilizing web pages.

Duffy et al. teach an e-commerce system utilizing web pages on the Internet to receive order information (See for example paragraphs 0045-0046) and further teach

that it is well known to grasp an actual sales condition and supply or stop supplying the merchandise based on the sales condition (See for example paragraphs 0116-0118)

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Sharp et al. to include the supplier supplying the merchandise based on an actual sales condition, and the network being the Internet utilizing web pages, as taught by Duffy et al., in order to provide the proper inventory as needed (See for example Duffy et al., paragraphs 0116-0118) and to reduce cost investment (See for example Duffy et al., paragraph 0028).

The Examiner takes Official Notice that it was well known in the art of commerce for a second sales channel (i.e., a second buyer of goods) to make a purchase request that does not utilize the network but instead uses mail, face-to-face, phone, or fax communication. *Re claims 16-20, the "first order information forming device" would be the computer using the network (as disclosed in Sharp et al.) and the "second order information forming device" would be the receiving fax machine or phone.*

Re claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 12, 13, 17, and 18: Sharp et al. in view of Duffy et al. lack the specific teaching of stopping the supply of merchandise due to the sales debut of a new product. However, it is well known in the art to stop the supply of a product when it is about to be replaced by a new product and it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to employ the step of stopping the supply of a product for a predetermined period before a new product is released, to prevent the accumulation of unwanted inventory.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to all claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to F. Ryan Zeender whose telephone number is (703) 308-8351. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Bob Olszewski can be reached on (703) 308-5183. The receptionist's phone number for the Technology center is (703) 308-1113.

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

F. Zeender
Primary Examiner, A.U. 3627
October 12, 2004

 10/12/04
F. RYAN ZEENDER
PRIMARY EXAMINER